

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Signed	
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1. Introduction

Skills4 is the trading name of I & F limited. Skills4 is a niche training provider offering apprenticeship training programmes to community pharmacies, hospitals, hubs and primary care networks.

Skills4 wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity, whether required by legislation or not, in all aspects of its activities as an employer and training provider. To this end, Skills4 will take all reasonable practicable steps to ensure that there is no discrimination against any individual or individuals, including colleagues, directors, beneficiaries, learners and customers, on account of their disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

This policy is approved by the Managing Director and covers all areas of the business which include but not limited to ESFA Government funded provision and ESF match funding. Actions are embedded into the Equality and Diversity Development Plan and Quality Improvement Plans. The policy will be monitored, reviewed at least annually and updated accordingly in line with any legislative changes and approved by The Board. The policy can be made available in alternative in alternative formats on request.

Reason for policy:

The overall purpose of this policy is to abide by the Equality Act 2010 and to ensure that Skills4 is a place where learning and work exists in an environment that promotes equality of opportunity, celebrates diversity and allows everyone to achieve their potential.

This policy will be communicated through different means to all staff, learners, stakeholders and prospective employees and is approved and reviewed by the Board at least annually.

Our commitment is that every:

- Employee is entitled to a working environment which promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Individual is entitled to receive a service from Skills4 that is free from bias and all unreasonable barriers.
- Employee, learner, customer and supplier is entitled to expect equality of opportunity in all aspects of their employment , training and engagement with us, including its terms and conditions.
- Potential employee and learner is entitled to expect the recruitment process to be free from all unreasonable barriers.
- Learner will be supported in their learning to allow them to succeed in line with peers and progression to new opportunities.

- Employee will be provided training and development opportunities to support their understanding and commitment to the policy.
- Manager will be committed to monitoring progress towards targets set for representation and performance of different groups.

2. Policy

Principles

The Company Values will embed equality and diversity in their implementation, namely:

- **Act with integrity & do the right thing** – we endeavour to be open, honest and act with integrity towards all stakeholders.
- **Learner Centric** - and we are driven by the desire to improve the skills, knowledge, behaviours and careers of our learners.
- **Continuous improvement** – we are committed to continually exploring ways to improve the quality of our offer for all stakeholders.
- **Develop and empower our staff** – we are passionate about supporting staff at all levels so that they can realise their full potential and progress.
- The Company actively promotes British Values through tutorial and classroom delivery, using the following key themes:
 - Democracy
 - The Rule of Law
 - Individual Liberty
 - Respect and Tolerance

In June 2014, the Government emphasised the important role that British Values can play in education, how well these are taught and integrated as part of the ethos of post 16 education. They are now a focus of the Ofsted inspection process.

As well as actively promoting British Values we would also actively challenge learners, employers, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views of any variety.

Learners will be made aware of Equality and Diversity and British values at their induction and within the learner handbook. This will be reinforced throughout the programme.

We will seek the views of our learners, customers, employees and stakeholders in relation to the implementation of the policy and the effectiveness of the service we provide to them in line with the commitment statement we make .

Complaints

Any complaints regarding equality and diversity will be dealt with through the complaints process.

Objectives of the policy are to:

- Regularly report to the Board on equality and diversity matters and the performance and participation of different groups of learners.
- Regularly review the policy and procedures that promote and protect equality and diversity.
- Organise or access opportunities that foster a culture of equality for all.
- Monitor procedures and activities to ensure the effectiveness of Skills4 approach.
- Take into account the needs of all, particularly those with protected characteristics.
- Take positive action to redress unjustified disparities in training and / or employment.

Statutory Acts

There are a number of statutory and other provisions relating to Equality & Diversity and these are enveloped in one Single Equality Bill (October 2010). These include:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Religion Act 1976
- Disability Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Equal Opportunities Statement

Skills4 is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and training provider, promoting and developing equality and diversity for staff, customers and suppliers across all of our services.

It will seek to do this by:

- Communicating our commitment to equality and diversity to all
- Creating an environment where there is mutual respect and equality of opportunity providing relevant training for all staff
- Implementing mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and review what we do to promote and embed
- Treating acts of discrimination as a disciplinary offence dealing with harassment and bullying timely and effectively
- Engaging staff, learners and stakeholders in the development, implementation and execution of our policies

All employees, suppliers, learners and customers will receive equal treatment regardless of sex, marital or civil partnership status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender realignment, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief.

3. EDI Monitoring

Skills4 is firmly committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse learning environment that upholds equality and complies with relevant guidelines. This policy outlines our commitment to adhering to guidelines, monitoring EDI data for diversity and inclusion indicators, and taking prompt actions to address any identified disparities.

Examples of data collected:

- Underrepresented demographics
- Disparities in progression
- Inclusive learning materials
- Unequal participation

Examples of issues and potential resolutions:

Issue	Example	Resolution
Underrepresented demographics	EDI data reveals an absence of representation from specific demographic groups within our apprenticeship programmes.	We will proactively assess our outreach strategies and engagement efforts to ensure equitable access for underrepresented individuals. Tailored initiatives will be developed to attract a diverse range of apprentices. Examples could include monitoring application routes, forms and marketing materials.
Disparities in progression	EDI data highlights noteworthy differences in progression rates among different demographic groups.	Our Quality Team will conduct a thorough analysis to identify potential barriers to progression. Tailored support and mentorship programmes will be implemented to ensure equal opportunities for apprentices from all backgrounds.
Inclusive learning materials	EDI data reveals that certain learning materials may not be accessible to all apprentices, particularly those with specific needs.	We will review and enhance our learning materials to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to individuals with diverse learning styles, abilities, and needs.

<p>Unequal participation</p>	<p>EDI data indicates variations in apprentices' participation levels in extracurricular activities based on their backgrounds.</p>	<p>Our team will work to promote a welcoming and inclusive environment where all apprentices feel encouraged to participate. We will actively address any biases or barriers that may discourage participation.</p>
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4. Definitions

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably in relation to any of the protected characteristics.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination is a discrete type of discrimination that involves a policy, rule or procedure that is applied to everyone in a certain area but, ultimately, puts some individuals or groups at a disadvantage. Just like direct discrimination, indirect discrimination can be posed as a formal or informal rule, practice or policy that may control behaviour or set standards in the workplace.

Discrimination by Association

Discrimination by association is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Harassment

Harassment is recognised and means that employees will be able to complain with regards to behaviour that they find offensive, even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristics themselves.

Bullying

Bullying is not a natural behaviour and should not be seen as such. It typically can be when someone uses superior strength or influence to intimidate.

Victimisation

Victimisation is the action of singling someone out for cruel or unjust treatment.

All matters of discrimination, bullying and harassment will be dealt with effectively and efficiently, using the following processes where applicable:

- Complaints Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Staff Discipline Policy
- Learner Behaviour Policy
- Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy

Implementation

The Board carries the ultimate responsibility, the under law, for ensuring that Skills4 meets the requirements of equality legislation. The authority for this is delegated to the MD who will also take the strategic lead for championing equality, diversity and inclusion. This role is shared with the Head of Operations in regard to the Company as an employer. However, all colleagues have the responsibility to uphold the policy, comply the law and support the Company in fulfilling its duties and commitments.

5. Related Policies

- Complaints procedure
- Learner handbook and enrolment processes
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy
- Learner Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy